**Post:**

**How would you use Google's Site Search and Web Analytic tools for your school's Web site?**  
Website optimization is a process to insure that the site fulfills users’ expectations as well as the purpose intended by the organization (Weischedel, 2000). E-commerce websites are all about traffic and how to increase traffic and how to get the desired traffic. Educational websites should have the same goals. Website analytic tools are under utilized in education. By using Google's Web Analytic tools, we have the ability to monitor the traffic on our website. The tools enable us to know how many people are visiting our site as well as what areas of our site are they utilizing. We can use this information to determine what areas are successful and what areas need further development. Web analytics can continuously improve web design team’s understanding of users and their usage of the web site.  
The larger the website the more valuable Google's Site Search is. We can create user friendly websites with good navigation and a site map, but viewers may still have difficulty finding the information they are looking for. Site Search gives them a quick search mechanism. I personally use Site Search tools frequently and find them to be a valuable tool. If we want to increase the usability of our websites we must make it easy for our viewers to find information and find it quickly. Google's Site Search tool satisfies that need.   
  
Shen, D., Wang, X. & Chen, H. (2008). Managing Web-based Learning Resources for K-12 Education: Lessons Learned from Web Analytics. In C. Bonk et al. (Eds.),Proceedings of World Conference on E-Learning in Corporate, Government, Healthcare, and Higher Education 2008(pp. 470-475). Chesapeake, VA: AACE. Retrieved from <http://www.editlib.org/p/29647>.  
  
Solomon, G, & Schrum, L. (2007). *Web 2.0: new tools new schools*. Eugene, OR: International Society for Technology in Education.

**Responses:**

I agree with your comments about Google's Site Search. Like you said it would help with the usability of the website to help users find what they are looking for within the website. I have done that on websites before and it allowed me to go exactly where I wanted instead of trying to find it my self.

Jack, I agree with your statements about the importance of analyzing users and their usage of a school web site. Until one knows who the users are and what their likes and dislikes are, it is difficult to make adjustments to your site. As Shirley Kaiser states in her book *Deliver First Class Web Sites: 101 Essential Checklists,* "Collect data about user demographics and the reason users visit your web site." (p.311) I also agree that web analytic tools are probably not utilized enough with school web sites. Only after collecting and analyzing data obtained from school web site users, can the web design and maintenance team shape and mold their site to better fit the needs and the interests of their users.  
  
Kaiser, S. (2006). *Deliver first class web sites: 101 essential checklists.* Collingwood, VIC, Australia: Sitepoint.

We do not collect data about user demographics at all. I already have misgivings about some of our parents being comfortable about using the web site more but I would not have any data to back up my thoughts. I think our parents might be more comfortable typing their problems or questions instead of speaking to someone face to face. We did not find out until April that our principal had not been receiving the emails sent to her through our web site. Luckily, she had only received four!

Jack, Thanks for the information on this topic. I do not know if our district monitors usage and statistics of our district web site. I do know that our school does not collect any data at all on our end, but it is possible the district, through our CMS, collects this information at their level. When I get back to school in the fall, I am going to ask our campus technologist if we collect this data or not, and if so, what program they use.

Jack, Thank you for the information. My district does not have a search feature or monitors for the usage of the web site. I believe both of these feature would be of a benefit to the district web site. When school starts back, I am going to visit with the district technologist and see if there is any way to include these in the district web site.

Jack, I couldn't agree more with your statement that website analytic tools are underutilized in education. It does not seem like they do not take into account how and what people need to see and do with them. Our district website is quite a lot like other district websites I have seen in that they are glaring example of this -- it seems like they expect our website to be just a static repository of information about what happens in and around our schools and not so much as a medium of communication, interaction, and collaboration. I have not heard or seen any indication of our MIS and Communications departments being concerned about, discuss, or make any improvements about the website/s in this regard.

Jack, my campus does not use analytic tools to monitor traffic on our campus website. I am not sure if someone else from the technology department at our main office does this either. I do know that there are analytic tools being used to monitor usage of our gradebook and attendance program, SkyWard. In Skyward, there is a usage history screen that shows when and what parents log in to check on. This could be their child's grades, attendance, calendar, or schedule.